



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL ENERGY NETWORK
SAN LUIS OBISPO • SANTA BARBARA • VENTURA

For Immediate Release

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3C-REN Collaborates with Schools to Develop Next Generation Climate Workforce

-Engaging with high schools and trade schools to address skill gaps and workforce shortages-

San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura, Calif. – September 6, 2024 – Like other cities and counties across the nation, tri-county jurisdictions are striving to meet vital climate targets. Santa Barbara County aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions in half before 2030 and Ventura County also has a goal to reduce emissions by 41% below 2015 levels by 2030. Hitting these targets requires a skilled workforce capable of decarbonizing the region’s buildings.

3C-REN (Tri-County Regional Energy Network), a partnership between the Counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura, offers free training for students and existing workers to develop expertise in building science and green buildings. According to the California Energy Commission, California homes and businesses produce 25% of the State’s greenhouse gas emissions, making building decarbonization a key part of the climate strategy. This means making buildings as energy efficient as possible through upgrades like insulation and air sealing, and transitioning from fossil fuel-powered equipment like water heaters and furnaces to heat pumps that rely on clean electricity from providers like Clean Power Alliance and Central Coast Community Energy.

“Since 2022, we have collaborated with schools and trade programs, from high school Construction Tech programs to dual enrollment architecture programs, college HVAC trade schools and others across the tri-county region,” said Ian Logan, 3C-REN’s Building Performance Training Program Manager. “There are thousands of job opportunities in California as we work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. 3C-REN is getting into classrooms and building partnerships to ensure local youth are equipped to do this work. All across the country, states are training up a generation of workers to undertake these building upgrades, and 3C-REN is proud to offer hands-on training and certifications from leading experts, here in our region, all at no cost.”

Since its Guest Speaker initiative kicked off in 2022, 3C-REN has held 59 classroom sessions for students with over 1,300 attendees. Local high school students learn about career

opportunities in green building and construction, and vocational programs supplement their curriculum with topics like blower door testing and how to install a heat pump. 3C-REN has partnered with over 100 organizations to deliver workforce programming for the region and has recently expanded collaborations with vocational programs in Oxnard and Santa Maria that engage underserved students.

Scholarships for community college students were awarded to further encourage education with an emphasis on green buildings. “I am currently working on my associate degree in electrical technology and this scholarship will allow me to focus more intently on my coursework and extracurricular activities for class,” said Eneas Patron 2024-2025 Construction Tech Scholarship recipient and student at Cuesta College. “I plan to complete my degree in Electrical Technology and pursue a career in the field, gaining more experience to potentially move into an electrical engineering role to contribute to building efficiency with practices and technologies.”

Once students graduate, they can continue learning with 3C-REN's services for working professionals. These free training events help workers stay current with industry trends, acquire new skills, fulfill continuing education requirements, earn certifications and add value for their customers. Examples of training topics include Passive House design, the building envelope, ventilation, heating and cooling systems, water heating systems, electrification and more.

For more information about 3C-REN and the Building Performance Training program, or to bring a 3C-REN speaker to your classroom visit www.3c-ren.org/training.

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About 3C-REN

3C-REN (Tri-County Regional Energy Network) is a partnership between the Counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. 3C-REN takes a holistic approach to improve energy efficiency and develop workforce in the tri-county region. These efforts reduce energy use, strengthen local job markets and support climate goals. For more information or to start saving energy today, visit www.3c-ren.org.